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Hmong form alliance with So. Baptists

CHIANG RAI, Thailand (BP) — In a dramatic new twist for partnership missions, a Southern Baptist ethnic fellowship is forging a partnership with Southern Baptist missionaries overseas.

The alliance between the Hmong Baptist Fellowship and the International Mission Board (IMB) could be very good news for the Hmong of Southeast Asia.

Though largely unreached with the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ, the Hmong are responsive. Reports of whole villages turning to Christ are filtering out of the region.

A six-member team traveled to northern Thailand's Nan province in February to explore the possibilities for Hmong volunteers from the U.S. helping with witness and ministry projects in Hmong villages scattered throughout the mountainous region.

Hmong Baptist Fellowship leaders Tong Vang and Xeng Xiong, their spouses, and Bob McEachern, an associate director of the IMB's Volunteers in Missions program, met John Gibson, a Southern Baptist missionary physician who leads a team of missionaries focused on taking the gospel to the Hmong.

Gibson has led several mobile medical clinics to remote Hmong villages and is working on a plan to establish a permanent medical outreach based in northern Thailand.

As the group prepared to leave their hotel for the five-hour drive into Nan province, three men — leaders of the largest Hmong congregation in Thailand — ran up to stop them, McEachern said.



LEARNING TO READ — May Ye Xiong of Eastonton, Ga., taught literacy classes when a Southern Baptist team traveled to northern Thailand in February to explore ministry possibilities for Hmong volunteers from the United States. While Xiong and her husband were in Chiang Rai province near the borders with Laos and Myanmar, several Hmong made professions of faith and seven were baptized. (BP photo)

"These men had heard we were coming and rode a bus 10 hours to meet us. If we hadn't been running an hour late in leaving, they would have missed us entirely," he said. "They rode with us up to Nan, and we learned for the first time of their work among the Hmong."

"Before they left, Tong Vang and Xeng Xiong were able to give them copies of the Bible in the Hmong language. These men were very moved. It was the first time any of them had seen the Bible in their own language."

That Hmong translation of the Bible is proof the Hmong Baptist Fellowship is dedicated to reaching Hmong for Christ, McEachern said.

"They weren't able to find anyone to do the translation for them, so they translated it themselves," he said. "The year before that they translated and printed a Hmong hymnal."

Although the Hmong Baptist Fellowship is a voluntary association with no budget, Vang said the group can contribute Bibles, hymnals, and other materials they have translated. Volunteers

can help interpret for evangelistic projects and help train Hmong Christian leaders.

More than anything else, though, Vang wants to see Hmong missionaries at work among their own people.

"There are many, many Hmong there who need God, who have never heard the gospel and want to know God," he said.

It felt great to see them, but it doesn't feel so good to be so far away and to not be able to do much to help them.

"They are just waiting for us."

WHAT'S IN THE RECORD

Carey lawsuit filed

SBC resolutions listed

Elliff passes SBC gavel

IMB commissions 38

Missionaries recovering

SALT LAKE CITY (BP) — Southern Baptist International Mission Board (IMB) appointee Mark Roberts and his wife Jenny are recovering after being struck by an automobile in downtown Salt Lake City on June 9 while attending the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting.

Mark is in a back brace for crushed vertebrae, and Jenny Roberts was released from a hospital's emergency room in time to participate in the IMB commissioning service.

The Robertses were struck by an automobile while crossing a street in front of the Salt Palace convention center. The Robertses were appointed to a four-year term as career associates in Asia. Jenny lived in several Asian countries as a teenager. Mark, a licensed certified public accountant, served in the Navy and toured Vietnam in the late 1960s.

Both hold master's degrees in teaching English as a second language from Columbia International University in Columbia, S.C.

Looking back

10 years ago

In a 31-29 vote, the Southern Baptist Convention executive committee tabled a motion by committee member Paul Pressler of Houston, Tex. to force Baptist Press news service to respond to a litany of criticisms. Committee member Frank Ingram of Nashville made the motion to table.

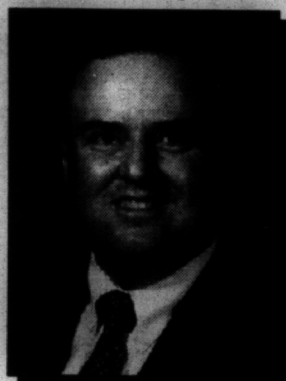
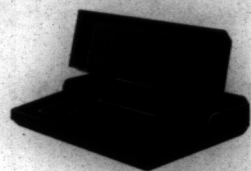
20 years ago

Breakfast will be served from the new disaster relief van, being completed by Baptist Men, at the Brotherhood leadership training retreat at Gulfshore Assembly in Pass Christian. The van, operated by a team of trained volunteers, will be used during disasters around the state.

50 years ago

First Church, Shelby, designated June 27 as "Mrs. E. W. Smith Day." Smith recently presented a Wurlitzer organ complete with chimes — the largest single gift ever made to the church, according to pastor Jewett J. Burson.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK



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Is this any way to run a convention?

Resolutions are an important part of any organizational structure. Resolutions speak to the sentiments of a group on issues of concern. Like initiative and referendum processes in government, resolutions afford the "little man" an opportunity to have his voice heard.

So it is in Southern Baptist life. Resolutions presented each year at the Southern Baptist Convention, at state conventions around the country, at associational annual meetings, and at the church level are one of the ways we indicate to others exactly who we are and for what we stand.

The opportunity — privilege, actually — to present resolutions to the bodies of messengers who gather each year for these crucial meetings is not to be taken lightly. A lost world will always be watching intently to determine if our words and actions match those of the Savior we profess.

There may be much more involved in the process, but we must not forget that to a lost world, it's that simple.

It is with that admonition that we consider the resolutions process in the modern Southern Baptist Convention, specifically at this year's annual meeting in Salt Lake City. Did we do a good job of reflecting the Savior?

One resolution called upon Congress to nullify President Clinton's May 28 order prohibiting discrimination in the federal civilian work force based on sexual orientation.

So far, so good. Southern Baptists have expressed strong moral reservations about the homosexual lifestyle, based on Scripture.

Then an amendment was proposed that called on Clinton's home church, Immanuel Church in Little Rock, to "prayerfully consider disciplinary action" against Clinton if he doesn't rescind his order.

In a frighteningly close vote, messengers rejected the amendment by a margin of 1,071-1,005 — 66 votes.

That means that of the 15 million Southern Baptists around the world, of the 8,000 or so who actually attended the convention this year, a total of 1,005 people in the hall at the time nearly voted to turn Southern Baptist polity upside down in directing an autonomous church body to consider action against a member.

That's also less than 2,100 total messengers out of more than 8,000 who registered. If you're at all curious, you might ask the messengers sent to represent your church where they were while that particular session was ongoing.

Put aside for a moment the issue at hand — homosexuality, against which Southern Baptist have spoken rightly and loudly. Put aside for a moment the fact that many Southern Baptists understandably see such orders by a fellow Southern Baptist as morally and spiritually wrong.

Just consider the implications of a hierarchal denominational structure directing churches to consider actions against members, even in the context of a toothless resolution.

There is no defense for the President's actions, but there is equally no defense for such an ill-conceived resolution.

The amendment was by no means the only attempt to abuse the resolution process. It seems more than a few people view the resolution process as a way to govern not only the Southern Baptist Convention but local churches as well.

Resolutions that express the sentiments of a specific group of messengers attending

"WE THANK THEE THAT
THOU DOST FORGIVE
SINNERS IF ANY
CANST BE
FOUND....
ALTHOUGH
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KNOWEST
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HARDER AND
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FIND ONE
WILLING
TO OWN
UP TO HIS
DEEDS....
I SURELY
WOULD IF I
WERE GUILTY
OF ANYTHING!"

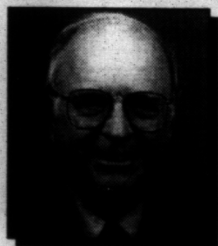


a specific convention in a specific year are appropriate, but what of the resolutions that seek to force decisions affecting the convention for years to come? What of the resolutions that unashamedly push political positions and personal interests?

Is this any way to run a convention? Does our conduct reflect the Savior? Every Southern Baptist has a right to decide, but one point must be made: There should be no place in the Southern Baptist resolutions process for the embarrassments we have witnessed in recent years.

Until we understand that, we are unfortunately in for more of the same.

GUEST OPINION



Choose to be an active citizen

By Edwin L. Pittman, member
First Church, Jackson

Our God is a God of government and of politics. He is in control, not only of the heavens, and not only of the body of Christ, the church, but God is also in control of this earth and the politics of the earth.

In recent years we saw the crumbling of Communist Russia, not by the might of men, not by the sharpened sword or the threat of terror, but we saw Communist Russia and the entire Eastern European Communist world come apart because God willed it.

World rulers, national leaders and local officials perform under the sufferance of God. God always has the power over nations and men.

God does not ignore nations or governments or politics. The Christian should not, either.

There is no conflict in being a citizen of the United States and a citizen in God's kingdom. There simply is nothing in being a good citizen, or for that matter, in holding public office, that requires a person to be less of a Christian than he should be or to be less active in God's work than he's called to be.

good citizen in one's civil life. In fact, a Christian citizen in God's kingdom will often be found as a leading citizen in his or her community.

What is good for God is good for the community and good for the nation, and what is bad in God's sight is invariably bad for our neighbors and for our nation.

Too often Christians cloak themselves in Christianity and avoid paying attention to their citizenship duties and responsibilities in the sectarian world. This simply makes more room for men and women who would do evil.

There is nothing in God's Holy Word that should cause us to be inactive or uncaring as citizens of our country.

Nor is there anything in our citizenship duties and responsibilities that would require us or cause us to be less than God requires us to be.

So in this time of celebration of citizenship, first I choose to be a citizen of God's kingdom.

Also, without conflict, I choose to be an active citizen and participant in the governments of our state and nation, always

Almost all of our criminal laws are derived from the moral teachings of the Holy Bible, and many of our laws and regulations are intended to encourage the morality that Christianity encourages.

There is no conflict in being a citizen in God's kingdom and a

remembering that our God is not only the God of nature, the God of creation, but he is also the God of government and the God of politics and the God of it all.

Pittman is an Associate Justice on the Mississippi Supreme Court.



**CHRISTIAN CITIZENSHIP
SUNDAY
June 28, 1998**

Executive committee meets, prays for new leader

By William H. Perkins Jr.
Editor

The quest for a new Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB) executive director-treasurer to replace the retiring Bill Causey moved forward when the MBCB executive committee met June 23 to pray over recommendations that have been submitted, according to committee chairman Robert Upchurch.

The Tupelo attorney reported that about 40 letters of recommendation were received by the June 4 deadline. Each person who was recommended received a letter requesting that the person pray about the recommendation and submit a resume if the Lord so led.

Upchurch said about 15 people replied to the committee's letter and submitted resumes.

"The materials submitted by the nominees who responded

have been duplicated and forwarded to each executive committee member. We met to pray as a committee that God's choice for this position will be revealed both to us and to the nominee.

"Our desire is to know God's will, and in carrying out that desire we ask that every Mississippi Baptist pray for the executive committee members," he explained.

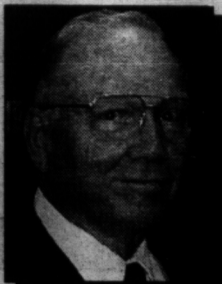
Upchurch could not give a time when Causey's replacement might be named.

Causey told the executive committee during an April 20 meeting that he planned to retire at the end of September of this year.

"All I presently know about

God's will for my life, mixed with common sense, causes me to take this opportunity to inform you that, insofar as I can humanly determine it, the time has come when I must advise you of my intention to retire at the end of September, 1998," Causey wrote in a letter he gave Upchurch during that meeting.

Mississippi Baptist Convention policy authorizes the executive committee to serve as the search committee for Causey's successor. Committee members indicated during the April 20 meeting that they would like to move swiftly in order to provide a transition period before Causey departs.



Causey



Upchurch

Causey, who turned 67 on May 7, has served as MBCB executive director-treasurer since 1989. He will celebrate 50 years in the ministry in August of this year.

The Greenville native pastored Parkway Church, Jackson, for 26 years before accepting the top MBCB post. Prior to that, he pastored Hopewell Church in Harrodsburg, Ky., while a student at Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky.; served as assistant pastor of Parkway Church, Jackson; and pastored Poplar Springs Drive Church in Meridian.



THE
SECOND
FRONT PAGE

THE BAPTIST
Record

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Suit filed over WCC grant controversy

By William H. Perkins Jr.
Editor

A former employee of William Carey College (WCC) is suing the Baptist-affiliated school in Hattiesburg, alleging his termination was connected to concerns he raised about false statements on an application for a federal grant.

Larry Braidfoot, former vice-president for academic affairs and provost at WCC, filed suit — formally titled "Complaint, Jury Trial Requested" — on May 14 in Forrest County Circuit Court in Hattiesburg. The suit asks for \$250,000 in compensatory damages, \$500,000 in punitive damages, unspecified economic damages, attorney fees, and interest.

The filing, which presents only one side of a legal argument, claims Braidfoot was fired because he questioned the truthfulness of statements made on an application signed by WCC Chancellor James W. Edwards for a federal Department of Education (DOE) Title III Strengthening Institutions grant.

The school was approved for the grant in 1994 but was forced, along with Edwards and consultant Barbara Jones of Senatobia, to repay \$345,666 after U.S. Attorney Brad Pigott of Jackson determined in October 1997 that false statements had indeed been made on the grant application.

Among the findings of the two-year DOE investigation that was released by Pigott:

- ◆ There was no annual assessment and development of WCC academic programs by a long-range planning committee, as attested in the grant application.

- ◆ There was no management and student information task force composed of specific members, as attested in the grant application.

- ◆ There was no faculty development committee with named members, as attested in the grant application.

"The government's investigation revealed that all such representations were false, in that no such committees or task forces in fact existed," Pigott reported.

Edwards was placed on temporary leave of absence on Sept. 29, 1997, by the WCC board of trustees, and he resigned the following Oct. 6 from his dual positions of chancellor and chief executive officer.

The lawsuit states Edwards, who had led WCC since 1989, now resides in Plano, Texas, but it does not list his occupation.

Braidfoot states in the lawsuit that after the grant was approved, he was provided a copy of the application in which he discovered "...no less than 25 misrepresentations regarding certain committees alleged to exist... including the representation that the Plaintiff (Braidfoot) had been a member of a committee which had made certain recommendations included in the grant application, whereas the Plaintiff had been a member of no such committee and had authorized no such use of his name..."

Braidfoot claims in the lawsuit that when Edwards and others did not provide a response to his requests for an explanation, he took his concerns to certain WCC trustees in positions of authority on the board, and the board eventually authorized a "sham investigation, controlled by the Defendant, Edwards,... which was erroneous, incomplete, and misleading, and which was wilfully (sic) calculated to conceal wrongdoing of the Grant Application..."

Braidfoot contends in the lawsuit that the "sham investigation" was then used to break his employment contract with the school, resulting in his firing on May 19, 1995.

He states in the lawsuit that his termination was in retaliation for reporting "clear violation of board policy and of federal law and because the Plaintiff had not given his after-the-fact assent to the false and unauthorized use of his name in the Grant Application..."

A telephone number provided by directory assistance for a James Edwards in Plano, Texas, went unanswered up to publication deadline.

Braidfoot's attorney, David C. Frazier of Pascagoula, declined to comment on specifics of the pending lawsuit but did say, "This is not a knee-jerk reaction on Larry Braidfoot's part. He never, ever wanted to do this until it became obvious it was going to be necessary."

No trial date was announced.

Pittman donation



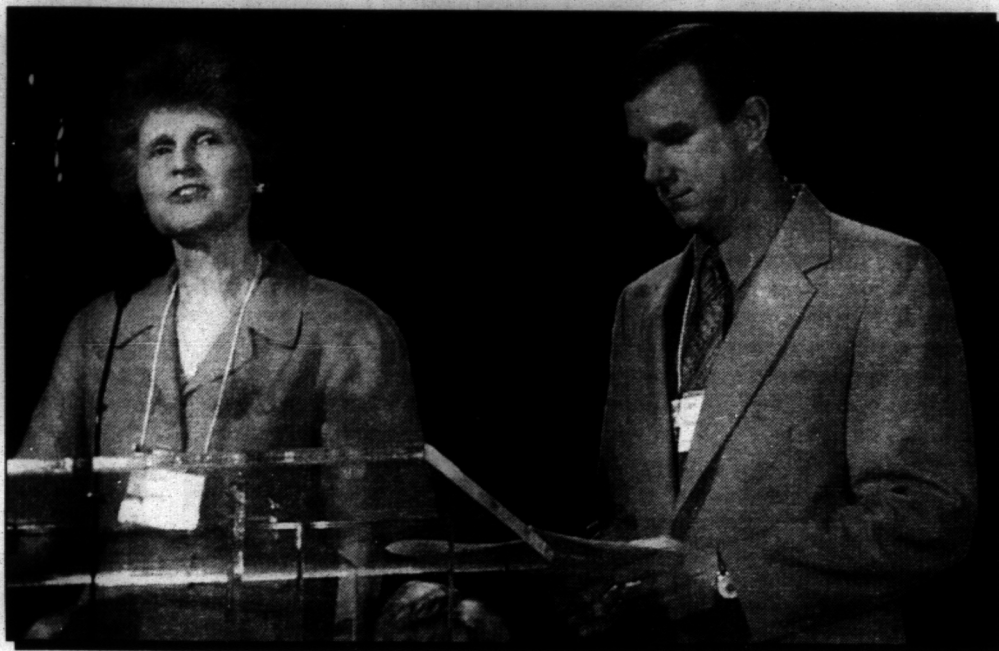
Jane Newell (left), associate director of the Mississippi Baptist Foundation, and Pat Hutton, administrative assistant at the Foundation, admire the original "Annabelle" pattern beverage urn donated to the Foundation by renowned Mississippi artisan Gail Pittman of Ridgeland. The urn will serve as a door prize at the Foundation booth during the Senior Adult Conference of Family Festival '98 on June 27 at Parkway Church, Clinton. For more information on the Foundation and the urn, visit the foundation's booth at the festival. For more information on Family Festival '98 — which is free and open to everyone — contact Larry Salter at the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board. Telephone: (601) 968-3800. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)

No BR on July 2

Due to U.S. Postal Service regulations limiting publication of The Baptist Record to 50 issues per year, there will be no issue on Thursday, July 2. Publication will resume on July 9. News items to appear in the July 9 issue must be received by July 2. Churches which use the "special page" feature must ensure those items arrive at Cain Lithographers no later than noon on July 7.

Resolutions addressed by SBC messengers

SALT LAKE CITY (Special) — Messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) in Salt Lake City June 9-11 had the opportunity to vote on a number of far-ranging resolutions.



RESOLVING — Clark Stewart (right), pastor of Harmony Church, Crystal Springs, and member of the Southern Baptist Convention Resolutions Committee, listens as fellow committee member Eunice Smith of Alabama presents a portion of the committee's report to messengers at the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting June 9-11 in Salt Lake City. (Photo by Carl M. White)

They acted first by quickly approving a statement on the true Christian gospel, which describes the Bible as "the complete, trustworthy, and inerrant written record of God's revelation of himself to man."

Messengers also took dead aim on the need for moral character in public officials.

After the proposed resolution was presented, Wiley Drake of California moved that it be amended to include President Bill Clinton's name as one about whom serious allegations of moral and legal misconduct continue to be made. "I think we ought to be strong salt," he said.

Resolutions Committee chairman Michael Whitehead agreed the world needs all the salt and light it can get but said there is no need for Southern Baptists to be personal when it is not necessary.

Without further discussion, messengers rejected Drake's amendment and approved the resolution with little opposition.

Messengers approved without discussion a resolution opposing women in combat.

Messengers gave easy approval to a resolution on public funding of anti-Christian bigotry — again without discussion.

Messengers OK'd a statement on strengthening the marriage covenant, after some discussion.

On another front, messengers approved a statement directed at the president's recent executive order prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in the federal workplace.

Wiley Drake of California sought to amend the resolution to include an additional statement — "that if President

Clinton will not rescind his order that the Southern Baptist Convention urge his home church to prayerfully consider disciplinary action based upon the holy Word of God and upon the church's possible violation of Article Three of the convention's Constitution, which says, 'Among churches not in cooperation with the convention are churches which act to affirm, approve or endorse homosexual behavior.'"

A Resolutions Committee spokesman opposed the amendment, saying it should be left to the SBC Credentials Committee to enforce that clause of the Constitution.

The show-of-ballots vote on the amendment was too close to call. Thus, messengers were forced to take a ballot vote, in which the amendment was defeated 1,071 (51.6%) to 1,005 (48.4%).

Messengers then strongly approved the proposed resolution.

Overall, convention messengers submitted 27 statements to the Resolutions Committee. Of those, only nine were reported out or combined into joint resolutions. Resolutions not reported by the committee included statements on world evangelism public education, abortion, a national parents' day, starting Christian schools in churches, television morality, renaming Easter as the Festival of Resurrection, moral breakdown, and support of God's covenant with the nation of Israel.

'98 SBC motions approved; referred for action

SALT LAKE CITY (Special) — Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) messengers approved a plan during their annual meeting in Salt Lake City, June 9-11, to use resources of the 16 million-member denomination to help America step-up its efforts in the 30-year war on drug abuse.

The motion was the only one considered by messengers. The SBC's Committee on Order of Business sent 22 other motions to convention entities for further action and outgoing SBC President Tom Elliff, on advice of the Committee on Order of

Business, ruled five others out of order.

The Committee on Order of Business referred five other motions to the Executive Committee:

- amend Article I of the Baptist Faith and Message to strengthen language affirming the truthfulness of the Bible.

- allow floor votes on resolutions brought by messengers to the annual meeting that are not affirmed by the Resolutions Committee.

- adjust the six SBC seminaries' funding to reflect enrollment of all students, including those enrolled at off-campus teaching centers.

- direct all SBC entities to discontinue using Internet providers that offer ready access to pornographic web sites.

- subsidize child care during SBC annual meetings.

Four motions were referred to the North American Mission Board (NAMB):

- develop and distribute materials to all SBC churches teaching how to witness effectively to persons living a homosexual lifestyle.

- provide participants of future conventions with a list of local churches, phone numbers, and contact persons to give to residents who accept Christ during the annual meeting.

- produce a video and CD on the fundamentals of the Baptist faith for missionaries in new work areas, such as the inner cities and rural areas.

- establish a scholarship-funding organization to receive and disburse funds to help K-

12 students attend Christian schools.

Two other motions were referred to single SBC agencies:

- ERLC — Develop a plan to assist churches to assist churches in conflict with their local governments over restrictions on how their land and facilities are used.

- Annuity Board — Hold at regular intervals of time an open enrollment to its health insurance group plan to all annuitants who wish to enroll regardless of any pre-existent medical conditions.

Three motions were referred to more than one SBC agency:

- NAMB and International Mission Board — Allow upon "individual qualifications" those people who are divorced to serve as full-time SBC missionaries.

- Executive Committee and Annuity Board — Encourage SBC churches to receive a love offering on Annuity Board Sunday (fourth Sunday in June) to support the "Adopt-an-Annuitant" program.

- Executive Committee and NAMB — Study the feasibility of using television broadcasts "on a regular basis" to invite people to attend Southern Baptist churches.

The five motions ruled out of order included:

- Directed newly elected SBC president Paige Patterson to write President Bill Clinton in support of a strong national defense.

- Request SBC President Paige Patterson to send letters to Bill Clinton and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu supporting the recent biparti-

san efforts of U.S. congressmen urging Clinton not to use diplomatic pressure to encourage the Israeli government in its pursuit of peace to yield its sovereignty over land it deems vital to its national security.

- Support and pray for Judge Roy Moore, a "fellow Southern Baptist" who has been criticized for holding prayer and displaying the Ten Commandments in his Gadsden, Ala. courtroom.

- Commend Paige Patterson for his leadership in returning the SBC to theological conservatism.

- Direct NAMB to add under its supportive operations a request that the Executive Committee ask its attorney to offer legal services to churches and missions in legal conflict with local governments over land use.

Top 10 states at SBC meet

SALT LAKE CITY (BP) — The top ten states in messenger totals for the 1998 Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) annual meeting June 9-11 in Salt Lake City were:

1. Georgia	800
North Carolina	800
3. Tennessee	725
4. Oklahoma	700
5. Texas	580
6. Alabama	540
7. Mississippi	500
8. South Carolina	450
9. Florida	400
Kentucky	400

Mississippians at SBC



Kiely Young (left), pastor of First Church, Gulfport, visits with Sandra Gunn and her husband Frank, pastor of First Church, Biloxi, during a break at the Southern Baptist Convention in Salt Lake City. (Photo by Carl M. White)

Elliff says God cleansed SBC of 'parasites'

SALT LAKE CITY (Special) — Tom Elliff challenged Southern Baptists to strive for personal holiness and practice a passionate commitment to evangelism in his final address as president of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) June 9 in Salt Lake City.

Elliff also said Southern Baptists have God to thank for ridding their convention of "parasites," an apparent reference to organizations of moderate Southern Baptists who have lost influence in the 15-million member denomination during the two-decade resurgence of conservative leadership.

Elliff, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church in Del City, Okla., likened the nation's largest evangelical denomination to a "ship of Zion" that is subject to forces which would either drive it or draw it off course.

"The blowing winds of cultural change ... currents of popular humanistic thought, theological tides that come in and draw us out ... all are relentlessly working against the course God has established for us," Elliff asserted during the opening session of the 1998 SBC meeting.

Elliff used the imagery of barnacles on a ship's hull to warn that "parasites" occasionally need to be removed from the SBC.

He said these growths, which attach themselves to the understructure of vessels, are unable to stand the scrutiny of light and with no power of their own they move through the water at the expense of the ship, hindering its speed and maneuverability.

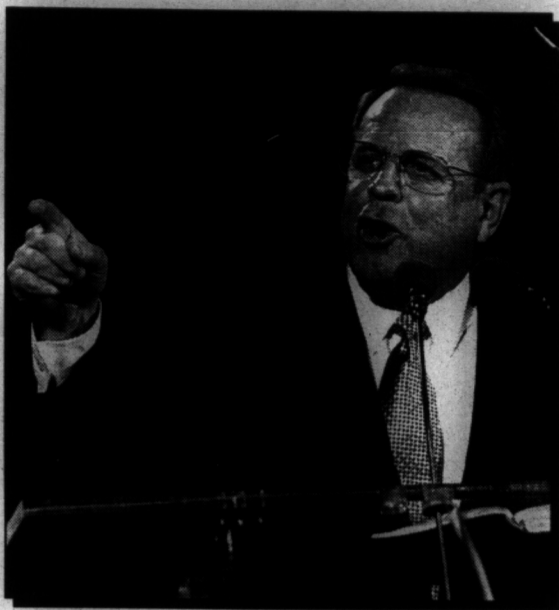
He said Southern Baptists owe much to men who stood "flat-footed and iron-backed and broad-shouldered and spoke with such prophetic force that the very hull of the ship would reverberate with their thunder."

"That thunder shook off the barnacles of parasitic unions, conferences, and fellowships, no matter how Baptist or Cooperative they seemed to be," Elliff said, in an apparent reference to the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and other moderate Baptist groups.

"We need to pray for more of that prophetic thunder in this generation," he declared.

Speaking to thousands of messengers and others attending the annual SBC gathering, Elliff said divine guidance is what rescued the Southern Baptist ship from peril.

"It is to God alone that everyone across our convention must give thanks for fre-



FAREWELL ADDRESS — Tom Elliff, outgoing president of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) and pastor of First Southern Baptist Church, Del City, Okla., delivers the president's address during the opening session of the SBC. (BP photo by Kent Harville)

quently raising up among us..., voices which have called us to alarm when Southern Baptists began to stray from a soundly Christ-centered, Word-driven, missions-focused, Spirit-empowered course.

"It is God who has put in the hearts of the vast majority of Southern Baptists to heed those voices," Elliff declared.

Citing examples from Southern Baptist history, Elliff said the convention has overcome "popular tides blowing us toward the rocks of ineffectiveness" by finding "a better way" to do things.

One such example involved changing from a societal approach to a unified missions support system known as the Cooperative Program.

Elliff described the Cooperative Program as a "wonderful but often abused tool."

He said the name "does not give us any kind of a heart charge when we hear it" but noted that the Cooperative Program became Southern Baptists' "means of establishing what have become the two greatest mission-sending agencies among evangelicals in the entire history of Christendom."

"Others only dream about that kind of support," Elliff said to applause.

In another example, Elliff called Southern Baptists' six theological seminaries "the envy of other denominations."

Over the years, however, the schools have been battered by "storms of modernism and post-modernism, lulled into the doldrums of Neo-orthodoxy, and pulled by the rip tides of Universalism," he said.

"But within the hold of the Southern Baptist ship there arose a rumbling of discontent" that some ignored and others scoffed at, Elliff continued.

"What some labeled a 'mutinous takeover' by a few malcontents, Southern Baptists as a whole saw as a God-ordained take-back so that the course would once again be established on the inerrant and infallible Word of the living God," Elliff declared.

Giving a nod to a proposal to amend the Baptist Faith and Message statement by adding a section on the family, Elliff noted that Southern Baptists "have repeatedly refused to be intimidated by any entity which espouses a lifestyle contrary to" scripture.

"We refuse to be muzzled by a misinterpretation of the First Amendment when the nation needs to hear the voice of God again," he affirmed.

Elliff also listed three steps involving personal holiness that he said are needed for Southern Baptists "to become not less but more effective" in the future.

"Holiness seems to be the forgotten pursuit of this generation," Elliff said.

"In many churches, bath water, bathtub, and the baby in the manger have been thrown out the window in an attempt to be culturally sensitive."

Urging Baptists to emphasize the beauty of holiness, Elliff praised current efforts "to encourage pastors and staff members who have been brought low by thoughtless and uncaring" congregations.

"But what about the pain and interminable suffering of congregations who have watched leaders in the throes of personal immorality?" he asked.

"How weakened is the Body of Christ by the secret malignancy of secret sin in pulpit and pew?"



YOU CAN RESPOND RIGHT NOW!

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. *(I have sinned.)*
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. *(I repent.)*
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. *(I believe in Jesus.)*
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with him. *(I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)*

But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name (John 1:12).

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

Merritt predicts SBC battle 'will never be over'

SALT LAKE CITY (Special) — In the shadow of Mormonism's main temple, the chairman of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) executive committee urged Southern Baptists to maintain their stand against theological liberalism and criticized Mormon doctrine as "counterfeit Christianity."

The past 20 years have been Southern Baptists' "finest hour," said James G.

Merritt in the annual convention sermon during the SBC's Wednesday morning session in Salt Lake City. Merritt praised Southern Baptists for turning their denomination around theologically.

"A battle was fought, a war was waged, blood was spilled, but we took our stand," Merritt said.

He cautioned that the two decade "battle for the soul of our denomination" will never be over. "There may be a cease-fire, but... we can never let our guard down."

Merritt, pastor of First Church in Snellville, Ga., warned against "stealth liberals who fly in under spiritual radar" to steal colleges, seminaries, churches, and the denomination.

Merritt used the setting, just two blocks from head-

quarters of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) to blast Mormons as doctrinally separate from orthodox Christianity.

He commended their evangelistic devotion which has produced 60,000 missionaries, but declared their message "false."

In a clear attack against the Book of Mormon, a 19th century writing LDS churches hold as an additional revelation from God written on gold tablets and translated by LDS founder Joseph Smith, Merritt argued that God's revelation ended with the Bible.

"When revelation ended, so did inspiration. The Bible is the only word we have from God, and it is the only word we need from God...."

Therefore, we don't need Joseph Smith, Mary Baker Eddy, Ellen White, golden tablets, dreams, and visions."



Merritt

Exec. comm. re-elects Merritt

SALT LAKE CITY (BP) — During an organizational meeting June 10, members of the Southern Baptist Convention executive committee re-elected two officers by acclamation.

James Merritt, senior pastor of First Church, Snellville, Ga., was chosen to serve a second one-year term as chairman, as was vice chairman Rex Terry, an attorney and member of First Church, Fort Smith, Ark.

Forrest Lowry III, senior pastor of Spring Church, Spring, Texas, was elected without opposition as recording secretary. He succeeds Joe Reynolds of Texas who rotated off the Executive Committee. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be Sept. 21-22 in Nashville, Tenn.

WMU news

Church Leadership Training Conference will be held July 27-30 at Camp Garaywa. Times include Mon.-Thurs., 10 a.m.-2 p.m.; and Mon., Tues., and Thurs., 6:30-9 p.m. A weekend conference will be offered on Aug. 14-15 featuring guest speaker Wanda Lee, national WMU president. At each of these training events associational training and material will be available for associational WMU leaders. Free material from the state office and WMU/SBC will be available.

The Mother/Daughter Overnight scheduled for July 10-11 has been cancelled. Other Mother/Daughter Overnight camps for the remainder of 1998 include Oct. 23-24.



Senior adults of First Church, Kosciusko, participated in a special worship service and were honored with a luncheon. Pictured (from left) are Dot Craft, LLL president; Gwin Middleton and Kelly Middleton, senior adults chosen for the year; and Mark Parnell, associate pastor.

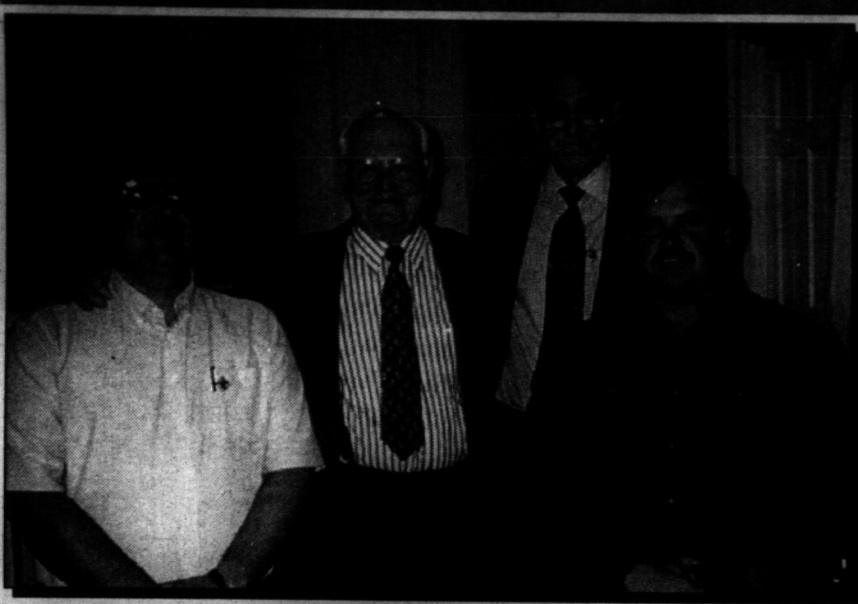
Homecomings

Hebron (Grenada): June 28; 90th anniversary; 10:45 a.m.; lunch and afternoon activities; J. B. Costilow, speaker; Jimmy Hood, music director.

Paynes, Charleston: July 12; Sunday School, high attendance, 9:45 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m.; noon meal in family life center; B. Gray Allison, president emeritus and founder of Mid-America Seminary, preaching; Harlin Fox, music; David Thomas, pastor.

Midway, Newton: July 26; 120th anniversary; worship, 10:30 a.m.; covered dish lunch, 11:30 a.m.; historical service, 1-2:30 p.m.; open house at pastorium, 2:30 p.m.; Mike Smith, message; Joe Vance, music; Wayne Miley, pastor.

NAMES IN THE NEWS



Main Street Church, Mendenhall, recently held a Deacon Ordination Service. Deacons (from left) are Wade Hays, Robert O'Neal, Lewis Hayman, and Robert Mangum. Dewitt Mitchell is pastor.

Edgar Glover, pastor emeritus of Maple Avenue Church, Smackover, Ark., was recently presented a plaque by the church recognizing the 50th anniversary of his ordination into the ministry. He was ordained Feb. 1, 1948, by First Church, Poplarville, when Judson Chastain was pastor. Glover pastored Mesa Church, Tylertown, and Harpersville Church, Harpersville, before moving to Arkansas. He is a graduate of Mississippi College ('49) and New Orleans Seminary ('52).



Sardis Church, Smith County licensed Frank Smith to the music ministry on May 3, 1998. Smith has led the music at Sardis for the past four years. Pictured from the left, Frank Smith and Blain McClain, pastor.



Two members of Main Street Church, Mendenhall, received ten year perfect attendance pins. Pictured (from center) are Patty Amason and Dewey Little, deacon. Dewitt Mitchell (left) is pastor.

REVIVAL DATES

Woodhaven, Ocean Springs: June 26-28; Fri. and Sat., 7 p.m.; Sunday, 6 p.m.; Sam Johnson, pastor, preaching; Burl Cooley, music; different groups singing each night.

Silver Creek, McComb: July 19-22; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 7 p.m. Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.;

preaching by Jim Hill with music by the Jim Hill Family of Laurel; Patrick G. Bourg, pastor.

Faith, Silver Creek: June 28-July 1; Sunday, 11 a.m., 1 p.m., other services, 7 p.m. through Wednesday; Dale Authement, evangelist; Dianne Berry, music; John L. Jones, pastor.

BAPTIST COLLEGE NEWS

William Carey College (WCC) and the Area Development Partnership's Small Business Council will present a seminar, "Growing Your Business on the Internet," June 30, 11:30-1 p.m., at the Jackie Dole Sherrill Community Center. Bob Ellis, associate professor of business at WCC, will instruct the seminar. Admission is free. For more information call (601) 296-7508 or 582-6193.

Mississippi Department

of Education approved the William Carey College Master of Education (Mild/Moderate Disabilities) program and the Master of Arts in Teaching program at the elementary 4th through 8th grade and secondary 7th through 12th grade levels. Programs will be offered on both the Hattiesburg and Gulfport campuses. For more information contact the education department at (601) 582-6139 or 1-800-962-5991, ext. 139.



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SATURDAY, JULY 11, 1998

10:00 A.M. PROGRAM

AT CAMP GARAYWA ACTIVITIES BUILDING

Come early for a visit with Marjean 9 - 10 a.m.

Marjean has served the Lord with Mississippi WMU for 41 years. Twenty-seven of those years she has been our Executive Director. Her retirement is effective August 28.

A "Book of Letters" is being prepared for Marjean. If you wish to write a letter for it, please bring the letter on July 11 or mail it to:

WMU (Book of Letters), PO Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205

Please make your reservations for lunch for July 11 by calling the WMU office: 1-800-748-1651.

DEADLINE FOR RESERVATIONS IS MONDAY, JULY 6.

JUST FOR THE RECORD



Becker Church, Becker, held a ground breaking ceremony May 31 for its new family life center. The ceremony consisted of the singing of hymns, reading responsively Psalm 24 and a brief statement of purpose by building committee chairman Donnie Moffett. Building committee members who participated in the ceremony were (from left) Lisa Tubbs; Faye Carlisle; Mary Dorris, minister of education and music; Moffett; and Morris Perry. (Not pictured are Bill Carlisle and Charles Holcomb. Fred Jenkins is pastor.

Fairfield Church, Moselle, will celebrate its 100th anniversary on July 12 at 10 a.m. Noon meal will be served in fellowship hall. Guest speaker will be Sonny Adkins, director, Evangelism Department, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board. Reggie and Ladye Love Smith will be in concert at 1:30 p.m. Ricky Trull is pastor.

First Church, Magee, is planning a Centennial Anniversary Celebration on Aug. 16. Lunch will be served at the church with a morning and afternoon service. For more information, contact the church office at First Baptist Church, P. O. Box 266, Magee, MS 39111; or call (601) 849-3304.

I Love America, a patriotic celebration, will be held at First Church, Laurel, Wednesday, July 1, at 6:30 p.m. Special guest will be Congressman Chip Pickering. Jimmy Little is minister of music. Randall Turner is pastor.

Bayou View Church, Gulfport, will have a special service, "God In Country," on July 5 at 10:45 a.m. There will be a color guard and recognition of military personnel.

First Church, Picayune, will host The Martins in concert on Saturday, July 25, at 7 p.m. For cost of tickets and for more information, call 1-800-294-4396.



Old Rice Road Church, Madison, held ground breaking ceremonies at the site of its future sanctuary and education building on Old Rice Road. Pictured is the building committee (from left) Jane Downard; Cheryl Brummett; Fred Tarpley, founding pastor; P. C. Garrett; Danny Plunkett; and Robert Still. This is the 31st church started by Tarpley, who officially retired in December 1997.

STAFF CHANGES

Bayou View Church, Gulfport, has called **Michael Gilreath** as minister of music. He is a native of Clay County, and a graduate of Mississippi State University. He previously served as music director at the U.S. Naval Home Chapel, Gulfport.

Blain McLain has accepted the call as pastor of New Zion Church, Lawrence County, effective June 21. McLain pastored Sardis Church, Smith County, for the past two years.

Unity Church, Moselle, has called **Douglas Moore** as pastor. He began his ministry effective April 8. His previous place of service was Park Haven Church, Laurel. Moore is a graduate of Tennessee Temple University in Chattanooga.

First Church, West Point, has called **Lee Gordon** as minister of music effective May 26. A native of Laurel, Gordon is a graduate of Belmont University, Nashville, Tenn., and New Orleans Seminary. He previously served at First Church, Houston. Gary Richardson is pastor.

First Church, Natchez, has called **Dan Wayne Robertson** as pastor effective March 29. Robertson succeeds Odean W. Puckett who retired after a 24-year pastorate. Churches Robertson previously pastored were West Heights, Pontotoc; Parkview, Greenville; Anchor, Water Valley; and New Hope, Starkville.

Harmony Church, Crystal Springs, has called **Dan Glenn** as associate pastor and minister of youth. A native of Clinton, Glenn received his education at Mississippi State University. He previously served at Liberty Church, Liberty.

Eddie Bates has resigned as pastor of Shiloh Church, Sontag, to accept a call to First Church, Reform, Ala., effective June 1. A native of Jayess, Bates received his education at William Carey College, Liberty University, and New Orleans Seminary.



Robertson



Gordon

J. Larry Goddard

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Church music dept. schedules conferences

Town and Country Church Music Conferences, designed for music leadership in smaller membership churches: bivocational/volunteer ministers of music, choir members, and keyboard personnel, will be held during July and August. The guest clinician will be Elmo Mercer. Time for all conferences will begin each night at 6:30 p.m. Places and dates are as follows:

◆ **Riverside Church, Clarksdale**, July 23-24, Thursday-noon, Friday;

◆ **Clear Creek Church, Oxford**, July 24-25, Friday-noon, Saturday;

◆ **Bissell Church, Tupelo**, July 30-31, Thursday-noon, Friday;

◆ **Becker Church, Becker**, July 31-Aug. 1, Friday-noon, Saturday;

◆ **Glendale Church, Leland**, Aug. 6-7, Thursday-noon, Friday; and

◆ **Enon Church, Grenada**, Friday-noon, Saturday.

Call the Church Music Department for more information or registration forms at 1-800-748-1651 or in Jackson at 968-3800 or register at the door at 6 p.m.

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For more information on locations and times, please call the Church Program Training Center of The Sunday School Board: 1-800-254-2022

Mississippi

OCTOBER 12-16, 1998
Trinity Baptist Church
Southaven, MS

Georgia

OCTOBER 12-16, 1998
Rehoboth Baptist Church
Tucker, GA

JANUARY, 1999

First Baptist Church
Snellville, GA

Tennessee

AUGUST 24-28, 1998
Central Baptist Church
Hixson, TN

SEPTEMBER 14-18, 1998
Clearview Baptist Church
Franklin, TN

SEPTEMBER 21-25, 1998
Wallace Memorial Baptist Church
Knoxville, TN

Louisiana

OCTOBER 5-9, 1998
Broadmoor Baptist Church
Shreveport, LA

JANUARY 18-22, 1998
New Orleans Baptist
Theological Seminary
New Orleans, LA

South Carolina

JANUARY 18-22, 1999
North Spartanburg
First Baptist Church
Spartanburg, SC

Alabama

AUG. 24-28 and NOV. 2-6, 1998
Vaughn Forest Baptist Church
Montgomery, AL

OCTOBER 5-9, 1998
Lakeview Baptist Church
Auburn, AL

Florida

SEPT 14-18, 1998
Olive Baptist Church
Pensacola, FL

SEPT 14-18, 1998
First Baptist Church
Merritt Island, FL

SEPT 28 - Oct 3, 1998
Idlewild Baptist Church
Tampa, FL

NOV 2-6, 1998
First Baptist Church
Daytona Beach, FL

Texas

AUGUST 10-14, 1998
Calvary Baptist Church
Beaumont, TX

AUGUST 24-28, 1998
Metropolitan Baptist Church
Houston, TX

IMB taps 38 new international missionaries



MISSIONARY NEWS

SALT LAKE CITY (Special) — The Southern Baptist International Mission Board (IMB) commissioned 38 new missionaries June 10. The additions raise the total of career IMB missionaries to 4,447.

The commissioning came as part of the Southern Baptist Convention's annual focus on foreign missions. It was the culmination of an appointment process that included a vote by IMB directors in April, according to Louis Moore, IMB's associate vice president for communications.

Nineteen of the new missionaries will serve in Asia, six in South America, 11 in Africa, and two in north Africa and the Middle East. Last year, Southern Baptist work overseas resulted in 283,000 baptisms and 2,451 new churches, reported IMB President Jerry Rankin. There now are more than 41,000 churches associated with the IMB's work.

"As we stand only 570 days before the year 2000, we are seeing the greatest opportunity for global evangelization since the first century," Rankin said. The spiritual harvest has expanded to "places once restricted," he added, noting the IMB's vision is to lead Southern Baptists to "bring all the peoples of the world to saving knowledge of Jesus Christ."

The IMB president encouraged pastors

and seminary students to take short-term mission trips and for each congregation to become a "global priority church," praying that people throughout the world will turn to Christ. "Our task is to push back the darkness," Rankin said during a presentation that stressed the need of Southern Baptists to bring the light of Jesus Christ into a world of spiritual darkness.

To illustrate the darkness, IMB Senior Vice President Avery Willis spoke of the 13 million people who live in Muslim-dominated Tunisia. There are fewer than 40 churches in that north African nation.

David Watson, an IMB strategy coordinator in India, said 92 million people in that Asian country "had never heard the gospel." But the light of Christ is shining there, he said, with 1,000 new churches started there since 1989.

Another story from the mission field revealed less about spiritual darkness, but much about Christian prayer and commitment. Missionary Wade Watts, who had been seriously injured in an auto accident more than two years ago and was in a coma for 12 months, appeared on stage in a wheelchair with his wife, Nancy. Speaking with a voice impaired by his injuries, Watts said, "I'm not sorry," when asked about his decision to go to the mission field. "I know I'm in God's will."

"We truly appreciate your prayers," Nancy Watts said to the messengers. She said the couple is looking forward to the day when they can again serve overseas.

Each of the 38 new missionaries shared testimonies of how God has led them to the foreign mission field. Most of them told of God's "call" upon their lives and how he used parents, pastors, church programs, and short-term mission trips to reveal that calling. Regardless of their assignment, Rankin said in his "charge" to the new missionaries, their task is to "push back the darkness" and allow others to "see the light of Jesus Christ." "You've given testimony of being called," he continued. "You have



ON THEIR WAY — Kathy Bush (right) speaks at the June 10 commissioning service for new international missionaries while husband Karl, a Mississippi native, looks on. The Bushes were among 38 people commissioned at the service during the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in Salt Lake City (Photo by Carl M. White)

recognized that God has summoned you."

As "bondservants" of Christ, the missionaries have said they are willing to "be separated from family and friends" and from the "amenities of America," Rankin said. "May you go in faithfulness...and obedience."



PLANNING A COMEBACK — Wade Watts (second from right) and his wife, Nancy (right), give their testimony during the report of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) International Mission Board (IMB) on June 10 as the SBC met in Salt Lake City's Salt Palace Convention Center. The Watts were IMB missionaries in Peru until an automobile accident two years ago left Wade severely disabled. After spending a year in a coma, he is now going through rehabilitation and can speak with some difficulty. He hopes to be walking again soon so that he and his family may return to their ministry in Peru. With the Watts on the platform are Avery Willis (left), IMB senior vice president for overseas operations, and Jerry Rankin, IMB president. (BP photo by Bill Bangham)

MS Positions Available

PASTOR: Eastside Baptist Church, Pelahatchie, MS. Send resume to: 146 Conger Dr., Pelahatchie, MS 39145

PART-TIME YOUTH MINISTER: University Baptist Church, 3200 West Arlington Loop, Hattiesburg, MS 39402. Primary responsibilities are planning and implementing youth activities and ministries. Leadership of the youth music ministry is a possibility but not requirement. Interested women or men, 25 years of age or older, may mail a letter and resume to Personnel Committee.

PART-TIME MINISTER OF MUSIC NEEDED. (Could become full-time) Send resume to: 2nd Avenue Baptist Church, ATTN: James Nichols, 1301 2nd Avenue, Laurel, MS 39440.

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FOR SALE: Church Furniture - three pieces: Communion Table, Pulpit, & Clergy Pew \$1400.00. Contact: Second Baptist Church, 4680 Walnut Grove Rd, Memphis, TN 38117. Phone: (901) 682-3395. Fax (901) 683-8771.

WANTED: Used set of Malmark handbells, 3-5 octaves. Contact Joseph Robinson or Bill Taylor,

Calvary Baptist church, 1121 Paul Bryant Drive, Tuscaloosa, AL (205) 758-0495.

NEED HELP, ENCOURAGEMENT, GUIDANCE: Jesus Is the Answer! Web Address: www.2ebicomm.net/~mem1.

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH seeks a Director of Preschool and Children Ministries. Send resume to PO Box 59474, Birmingham, Alabama 35259.

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TO THE GLORY OF GOD

Editor:

Fourteen volunteers representing ten Mississippi Baptist churches participated in a construction-evangelism mission trip to Barquisimeto, Venezuela, April 25-May 5, 1998, sponsored by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board and administered through the Partnership Missions Office with the assistance of the International Mission Board (IMB) missionaries Sam and Lisa Paris.

The purpose of the mission was to support El Dios Viviente Iglesia Bautista, the Baptist Church of the Living God, in Barrio Union in Barquisimeto, Venezuela, South America.

The team assisted their sister church in the construction of the second floor of the new church building.

The team constructed a concrete privacy wall, fabricated a metal staircase leading to the second floor, made wooden tables, and laid tile block walls.

The team assisted with neighborhood evangelism by making door to door home visits where team members gave testimonies and presented the plan of salvation to those visited. God used these home visits to save 25 individuals.

Team members also conducted a Backyard Bible Club in the home of Miguel and Jenny Correa.

There were a total of 128 different children who attended the activities during the week with the high attendance climbing to 82. God saved 20 of these children toward the end of the week when an invitation was given.

Many churches and individ-

uals in Mississippi provided gifts to finance the project and prayer support for those involved. Enough money has been provided to complete the construction which is ongoing at this time.

May God be glorified and praised through this mission project.

Danny R. Clifton
Louisville

NOTHING LIKE ON TV

Editor:

Thanks for sending me a copy of the resolution about husbands being the head of families (The Baptist Faith and Message, Article XVIII).

It is nothing like what the lady said on TV. It could be that this was a planned media scam or even an honest mistake.

We know that lots of the media are controlled.

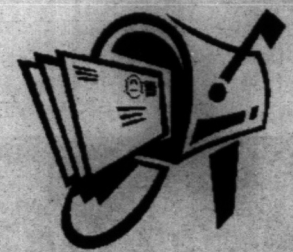
We know there are lots of people who are committed to a one world government and all religions outlawed except the one that the one world government approves as being the only God that there is.

We also know it was Baptists who helped keep us from having a governmental religion many years ago.

We know that many religions already have the belief that people have to pray through what they call church leaders instead of having direct access to God themselves.

Then you would have masses of people who believe they have no access to God, so the belief would keep them from having access.

Roy T. Lewis
Jackson



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Unsigned letters will not be printed. No multi-copy or form letters will be used.

Each correspondent must include an address and telephone number for verification. In special instances, name may be withheld at writer's request and editor's discretion.

Please include the name of cooperating Mississippi Baptist church where correspondent is a member. (Mississippi Baptists' letters will receive priority when space is limited.)

Letters must be limited to 250 words. All correspondence is subject to editing.

Correspondents should refrain from personal attacks. The opinions expressed in letters to the editor do not necessarily reflect the views of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

No more than one letter from any individual will be printed during a three-month period.

When in the judgement of the editor a given issue has received sufficient attention, correspondence dealing with it will no longer be published and a notice will be printed to that effect.

Falwell, church members enroll as '98 messengers

SALT LAKE CITY (Special) — Jerry Falwell has spoken at the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Pastors' Conference, preached in the pulpits of Southern Baptist churches, and put Southern Baptists on the trustee board of his Liberty University.

So in many respects his registering last week for the first time ever as a voting messenger to the 1998 SBC annual meeting was simply an official move to confirm the trend in which he has been moving for several years, said Falwell, the pastor of Thomas Road Church in Lynchburg, Va.

"I've been attending the Southern Baptist Convention for many years. This is the first time we have taken messengers and voted," Falwell said in an interview. "I don't know why we decided to send messengers this time as opposed to earlier, but we did."

Falwell and seven other members of Thomas Road Church registered as messengers, according to registration secretary Lee Porter.

The church reported giving to SBC causes last year through a new state convention formed by conservatives in Virginia.

"We have officially joined

about a year ago," Falwell said, adding that he has no intention of leaving some of the other independent groups he has supported through the years.

"We still hold membership in and give support to other groups that we've been affiliated with for 42 years," he stressed.

Falwell said his decision to join the SBC follows the completion of the denomination's move toward a more conservative stance.

"All six of the seminaries now have biblical inerrantists as presidents," he said.

"All the Southern Baptist agencies now are headed by inerrantists, and the thing that many of us thought never could happen — that is the return of the denomination to biblical authority — has happened," he pointed out.

Falwell noted that other churches also have joined the convention for the same reason. "I'm sure others will," he added.

"There is now no reason why we shouldn't be a part of it. We now feel the liberty to support the convention and to participate," Falwell reported.

He said he doesn't expect

criticism from independent Baptists for the decision to formally join the SBC.

Said Falwell, "We are still in good fellowship. We have not abandoned the Baptist Bible Fellowship," a group of independent Baptist churches.

He pointed out he doesn't intend to take an SBC leadership role, noting his responsibilities for Liberty University, the "Old Time Gospel Hour" broadcast and his 20,000-member church occupy his time.

"I don't have any plan to get politically involved, just spiritually involved," he said. "I really, at age 64, don't have the

energy to take on anything new."

Falwell, a longtime friend of newly-elected SBC President Paige Patterson, said he does intend to be involved in Patterson's goal of baptizing one million new Christians during the year 2000.

"We're training 1,000 pastors right now," he said. "Church planting is a major priority with me and has been all of my ministry."

"It is with Paige Patterson, and we plan to coalesce with our graduates in planting a lot of new Southern Baptist churches."

Salt Lake City News Briefs

WMU DEBUTS NEW INTERNET SITE AT SBC

The Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union debuted its latest Internet site June 8 in its exhibit at the Southern Baptist Convention in Salt Lake City. The new site is www.WMU.com. For questions or comments about the WMU web site, e-mail webmaster@wmu.org.

ONE MILLIONTH SBC MESSENGER REGISTERED

At 8:45 a.m. on Monday, June 8, Jennette C. Briggs of Fort Worth, Texas, stepped into Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) history as she became the 1 millionth registered messenger for annual SBC meetings. Briggs is director of alumni relations at Southwestern Seminary and a member of Fort Worth's University Church.

RETIRED TEXAS PASTOR TO PREACH '99 SERMON

Ralph Smith, pastor emeritus of Hyde Park Church, Austin, Texas, will preach the convention sermon at the 1999 SBC annual meeting in Atlanta. Charles Page, pastor of First Church, Charlotte, N.C., was elected as the alternate preacher.

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NAMB sets challenge to 'Get in the game'

SALT LAKE CITY (Special) — Emotional enthusiasm, a God-sized vision, and an emphasis on partnerships were centerpieces of the North American Mission Board's (NAMB) first ever annual report to Southern Baptists.

themselves celebrating successful missions one minute, falling to their knees in repentance the next minute and diving for palm-sized orange basketballs as they left.

Using state-of-the-art video productions, inspiring, and uplifting presentations from the singing Churchmen and Churchwomen of Oklahoma and the Oklahoma Baptist Symphony and a powerful prayer from Blackaby, Reccord vividly depicted missions opportunities in North America.

"We want you to know that we are focused," Reccord said. "We are taking the gospel to every person in partnership with you. We see a day when every person will have the opportunity to hear the gospel, respond with faith in Christ and participate in a body of believers right where they are," Reccord said.

Reccord enthusiastically reported increases and record-breaking numbers during NAMB's first year in existence.

Messengers voted at the 1997 annual meeting in Dallas to form NAMB from three existing agencies — Home Mission Board, Brotherhood Commission, and Radio & Television Commission.

NAMB experienced a 40% increase in volunteers, planted a predicted 1,500 new churches, and assisted more than 26,000 girls in crisis pregnancy situations in 1997.

Baptisms reached 412,000, an increase of 33,000 from 1996, Reccord reported.

"There were more than 100,000 volunteers in 1997," he added. "And right now we are 15% ahead of that."

NAMB also is stepping out in new directions, Reccord noted. From high-profile TV commercials with Olympic gold medalist Mary Lou Retton to a fast-paced program aired on many NBC affiliates featuring several NASCAR drivers, NAMB is using media technology to attract people to Christ, Reccord said.

With a strong partnering emphasis from NAMB officials, the SBC agency has combined forces with Chuck Colson's Prison Fellowship Ministry to produce evangelistic materials for prison inmates.

NAMB also teamed up with First Priority, an interdenominational program aimed at junior and senior high students, and is partnering with Southern Baptist seminaries to offer a North American Church Planting course.

Other evangelist thrusts planned for NAMB include penetrating 15 major cities in the United States with the gospel, witnessing through Internet sites, and sweeping Atlanta during the 1999 Crossover.

"One year ago you launched a ship and that ship was a battle ship, not a cruise ship," Reccord said. "The mission is sure, the course is set and the ship is strong."

BHS to build retirement center in Rankin County

Baptist Health Systems, Inc. of Jackson has announced plans to construct a retirement community in the Crossgates area of Rankin County.

The project, to be located on an undeveloped 6.8 acre tract of land bounded by Crossgates Boulevard, Crossgates Drive and Burnham Road, will provide a senior center, as well as 50 assisted living units, 50 independent living units and an adult day care center.

Construction is set to begin in the fall of 1998. The 105,000 square-foot project will be constructed in two phases:

- Phase One: an 11,000 square foot senior center/medical clinic.

- Phase Two: an 87,000 foot assisted living/independent

living facility in Phase II. A 6,300 square foot daycare center is planned for a later phase.

The senior center will consist of two medical clinics — a "seniors-only" clinic and an adult primary care clinic — with space for four physicians.

Included will be examination and diagnostic rooms, an education/community center, rehabilitation facility, and rooms for exercise, physical therapy, and hydrotherapy. Staff and support offices are also planned.

The Crossgates project follows Baptist's announcement in February of construction of Trace Pointe, a retirement community in Clinton.

In 1997, Baptist opened Ridgeland Court, an assisted living facility in Ridgeland.



LIFTING THE SAVIOR — Vocalist Bob Carlisle, best known for his No. 1 hit "Butterfly Kisses," performs during the report of the Southern Baptist Convention's (SBC) North American Mission Board at the SBC in Salt Lake City. (BP photo by Kent Harville)

Bibliocipher

By Charles Marx
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HUG PHAAJR WX NHD-
DHYPN; HUG YPFX
NPHAA DF H NZCU
DFYRFFU WF HUG XJK,
YPHY XF WHX MUJR
YPHY Z HW YPF AJLG
XJKL CJG.

FSFMZFA YRFUYX: YRFUYX

Clue: W = M

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Isaiah Twenty-Six Two.

'Vessels' video magazine to be shown around state

A new edition of the television version of "Vessels — A Video Magazine" will be shown on a number of ACTS (Odyssey channels) and other cable television systems around the state July 5-12 and at other times.

For churches in the state with access to a cable channel that are interested in broadcasting "Vessels," the Broadcast Services Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB) will provide on

Vessels

a loan basis a 3/4-inch, S-VHS, or other format videotape for broadcast.

The Broadcast Services Department would also appreciate hearing from persons who view "Vessels" on television. Call Broadcast Services Department at (601) 968-3800 in Jackson or toll-free outside Jackson at (800) 748-1651. Write to P. O. Box 530, Jackson MS 39205-0530.

Those churches and cable stations scheduled to run the "Vessels" tape are:

CITY	DATE	TIME	CABLE CHANNEL
ACTS of Greenville First Church, Greenville	July 5 July 9	7:30 pm 7:00 pm	Delta Cablevision Channel 98
First Church, Kosciusko Kosciusko	July 5 July 12	6:00 pm 5:00 pm	Northland Cable Channel 2
ACTS Broadcasting of Rankin First Church, Brandon	July 6 July 12	7:00 pm 5:30 pm	Rankin County Cablevision Channel 35
First Church, Bruce Bruce Cable	July 8 July 12	7:30 pm 8:00 pm	Cable One Channel 2
First Church, Grenada Grenada Cable	July 6 July 10	10:00 pm 8:00 pm	Cable One Channel 13
First Church, Yazoo City Yazoo City Cable	June 29 July 1	8:00 pm 8:00 pm	Cable One Channel 10

LIFE AND WORK

Self-centeredness

Phil. 2:19-24; James 3:13-16; 1 John 2:15-17

By Kevin Hand

LOOK OUT FOR NUMBER ONE. That's what psychologist David Seabury suggested in his book *The Art of Selfishness*, 1937. The unorthodox thesis of the best-selling book was that selfishness is good and selflessness is bad. Seabury challenged biblical teachings such as unselfishness, generosity, and adherence to the "Golden Rule." He asserted that man's first duty was to himself. His twisted advice to readers was: obey your nature, follow your own desires, please yourself.

Many Christians realize that selfishness is not an art to be learned but a sin to be avoided. Yet, we struggle with the tendency to become self-centered.

We too easily become focused on ourselves—our ambitions, needs, desires, interests, comfort, and security. We can concentrate more on having others serve us than on serving people. Our self-absorption can cause us to treat others as objects rather than as persons of worth to be valued and affirmed. We need to be reminded that genuine love is not selfish but has a genuine interest in others' welfare. Self-centeredness is a hindrance to spiritual growth; self-giving is both evidence of and a means to spiritual growth.

Contrast of two ways (1 John 2:15-17). Don't love the world or things in the world. Love for God and love of the world are



Hand

incompatible. John used the term "world" to describe that which is apart from God, the devil's domain and system. Loving the world means to selfishly desire to participate in that ungodly system.

John warned his readers that the world and its desires will pass away. They will be short-lived. An example of the temporalness of this world is found in Luke 12:15-21. In this passage Jesus told a parable about a self-centered man, a rich fool. Why was the man a fool? Because he thought life was about the abundance of possessions and earthly pleasure. He boasted about what he had and what he would do. In the end, the rich fool had nothing.

Jesus asked a pointed question: "What good is it for a man to gain the world, yet forfeit his soul?" (Mark 8:37, NIV). The world and worldly desires will cease, but a person who does

the will of God lives forever. Therefore, we must guard against allowing desire for what the world offers to take priority over doing God's will and loving him.

Results of self-centeredness (Jas. 3:13-16). Worldly wisdom says "look out for yourself," "get instead of give," and "do unto others before they do it to you." James describes such wisdom as "earthly, unspiritual, and of the devil" (v.15). Earthly "wisdom" generates envy and selfish ambition that result in disorder and evil practices. People who have an "I" problem are headed for heartache and trouble.

James says wise people will demonstrate their wisdom in the "good life" they live. The good deeds they do will be performed in humility. The terms "humility" (v.13, NIV) and "meekness" (KJV) refer to controlled strength, like a mighty stallion under his master's control. We are to live under

Christ's control and serve others rather than being self-serving. We are to cultivate unselfishness which helps bring about a lifestyle marked by good deeds done in humility.

Example of unselfishness (Phil. 2:19-24). John Ruskin observed that "when a man is wrapped up in himself he makes a pretty small package." Paul had a pretty large package to send to the Philippian Christians. He was sending young Timothy, his son in the faith, who had proved himself in Christian service. Paul told the Philippians that Timothy "takes a genuine interest in your welfare" (v.20, NIV). In contrast to people who looked out for their own interests, Timothy genuinely was interested in the Philippian believers' welfare. He really cared for them. Like Timothy, we are to have a genuine interest in the welfare of other people.

Hand is pastor of First Church, Magee.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Being a Christian in a hostile world

1 Peter 2:13-25

By William H. Sims, III

Remember your first job, how excited you felt to hold responsibility? My first job was at Revco Drug Store, Humboldt, Tenn. Jerry Davis was my boss, and how thankful I felt to have a Christian leader. Every day he allowed his witness to shine and I saw godly leadership in every adventure. This example is not true for every believer. Many find rejection and persecution because of their beliefs in Jesus Christ. Our lesson deals with believers facing persecution, and how their faith encouraged their situation. God demands his people to follow Christ-like attitudes

at work and home.

Being godly citizens (2:13-17). Peter called on the people to show godly character among pagan rulers. The New Testament consistently exhorts believers to obey the laws of their secular government. This voluntary submission was only to be accepted as long as there was no disobedience to the will of God. Carefully, read Romans 13:1-7 to find examples of this teaching. The term "submit" meant to rank oneself under someone. The term "ordinance of man" literally meant human institution. When citizens witness godly people obeying the laws, they realize we are showing reverence toward



Sims

God. Keep in mind, obedience is not contrary to God's holy word. Peter warned the readers not only to obey the law, but respect all persons as human beings. If we took this section to heart, truly the world would know God is love.

Being godly workers (2:18-20). This section becomes more personal to the Christian community. Any disrespect shown by Christian slaves could have brought severe repression from the government. The Greek word for "servants" referred to household servants. The word translated "masters" denoted absolute ownership with unrestricted power. "Forward" suggested a master that was crooked or unfair. If you have ever worked in the real world, you know not all opportunities are godly. Yet, this is exactly where the gospel needs to be proclaimed. God knows the condi-

tions we work under, and he has the power to keep us strong. Daily ask God to uphold you in various situations, and you will feel his mercy and grace.

Following Christ's example (2:21-25). As followers of the living Lord, we have an example to point the way. As Jesus endured undeserved pain, God's people must follow his example. Peter referred to Isaiah 53:12-13 to show Christ's suffering. Then, Peter quoted Isaiah 53:9 to stress the innocence of Christ. These passages offered hope to those suffering innocent persecution. Notice carefully that Jesus refrained from getting even with his offenders. Mercy, what a lesson to learn. As people cast insults at Jesus during his trial and crucifixion, he remained silent. When we react in love, this demonstrates total trust in God. Peter reminds us in verse 25, Christ is the guardian of our souls. Jesus is our good shep-

herd who watches and cares for all that happens to us. Reading Psalm 23 and Isaiah 53:6 reminds us that God knows every care.

How encouraging this sounded to those suffering extreme persecution. The greatest strength was to know and feel that Christ knew them personally. One of my favorite text is 1 Peter 5:7. Whatever we face or how wrongfully we are treated, God will hold us up. We are more than a number, we are a child of the King, and his saving power will extend victory.

Join me in this prayer: Teach me, Lord, to thank you for my trials. For those thorns in life that purify as they pierce and make me stronger, for the tears that blend with each touch of your love and form a rainbow that leads me closer to you. Jesus cares for you.

Sims is pastor of First Church, Pontotoc.

FAMILY BIBLE SERIES

Who do you think you are?

Job 38:1-7; 42:1-6, 10

By Nancie E. Simmons

It has been said that our life is the best witness to the lost. For some of us this is a scary thought. Think about how your friends see you. Are you a good witness to them? Remember God sees everything that we do regardless if it is done in broad daylight or in secret. God regarded Job as blameless, upright, fearful of him, and one that shuns evil. Job's friends told him that he must have sinned, but Job kept telling them that he had not. If they had only looked at Job's life they would have known that they were wrong.

In your Christian life what would God say your characteristics are? Do you ever compare

yourself to God?

God's question: revelation (38:1-7). When God started questioning Job to test his wisdom, Job knew immediately he had done wrong. He was probably delirious from the pain of his suffering when he was talking with God as if they were equals. Job's wisdom could never equal God's. I do not know how I would react if God started questioning me the way he questioned Job about the Creation. Only God could have created this wonderful world which is full of amazing things! Everything is tied together somehow and it boggles my mind to think about it. We really know little about why things happen to



Simmons

us, and we also have little control over them. God will reveal his plans to us in his own time.

Job's response: realization (42:1-6). Have you ever pretended to be on the same level as someone else? As a teenager I did it all the time with my parents. I assumed I knew everything that they did. For instance when they were teaching me how to drive a car I told them I knew how to drive a car. I had watched them many times and it was easy! Also, I could drive a riding lawnmower-what was the difference? Well, there was a big difference! I felt hugely inadequate when I got behind the wheel for the first time! It was hard to keep that huge piece of machinery between the ditches, and all those other cars were just in my way! I had to humble myself and admit that I did need some direction. They

did know more about driving than I did which was also true with many other things.

Driving down the big highway of life God is the expert and I am the novice.

Finding the right road sometimes is hard for me to do. If I have consulted God who is my map then I will be on the right road, but if I have decided to take the short cut chances are I will end up being lost. When Job realized what he had done, I am sure he felt very lost. He asked God's forgiveness immediately which put him back on the right road.

God's grace: restoration (42:10). When we have sinned and have asked forgiveness hopefully there has been a lesson learned. Job was wrong to put himself on the same level as God, and he recognized his mistake. He went straight to God for forgiveness and God forgave him. We must go to God as soon as we realize our sin and ask his

forgiveness. If we avoid repentance, unconfessed sin will get in the way of our relationship with God causing us to feel isolated from him. We have to move our pride out of the way and admit we are wrong no matter how hard it is to do. After Job repented, God blessed him with more than he had before his suffering. God blesses those who are faithful to him and ask forgiveness.

The chorus "Awesome God" is one of my favorites. It says "Our God is an awesome God. He reigns from Heaven above with wisdom, power, and love. Our God is an awesome God." Take some time today to stop and think about all the wonderful things that God has created for us to enjoy. Surely you will see that he is an "awesome God" with whom we could never be equal, and that is okay with me!

Simmons teaches music at Harper McCaughan Elementary and is a member of First Church, Gulfport.



Plans set for next phase of TLW campaign

SALT LAKE CITY (BP)—True Love Waits (TLW) will enter the 21st century with an international display of pledges of sexual abstinence signed by youth from countries around the world, according to Richard Ross, TLW spokesman and youth ministry coordinator at LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention (formerly Baptist Sunday School Board).

Southern Baptists learned about "Crossing Bridges with Purity," the next phase of True Love Waits, during the June 9-11 Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in Salt Lake City. Messengers and others touring the exhibit hall received buttons featuring the Golden Gate Bridge and promoting plans for a teen crossing of the San Francisco landmark in 1999.

The collection of pledges for the international display will begin in January and February 1999, when students will conduct local campaigns challenging their peers to commit to sexual abstinence until marriage, Ross said. On Feb. 12, schools, churches and local youth organizations will join forces to create a display at a focal point in their city or community. Those cards will next become part of state displays during the spring and summer of 1999.

Cards from state displays then will be sent to San Francisco for a national display at the Golden Gate Bridge on Oct. 2, 1999.

"The great majority of True Love Waits teenagers are moving into a new era of his-

tory with their heads held high and a strong commitment to moral purity," Ross said. "Their signed pledges of abstinence displayed at the Golden Gate Bridge will be a beautiful way to symbolize their movement toward the new millennium."

From San Francisco, cards will be forwarded to a point close to the International Date Line for an international display Dec. 29-31, 1999.

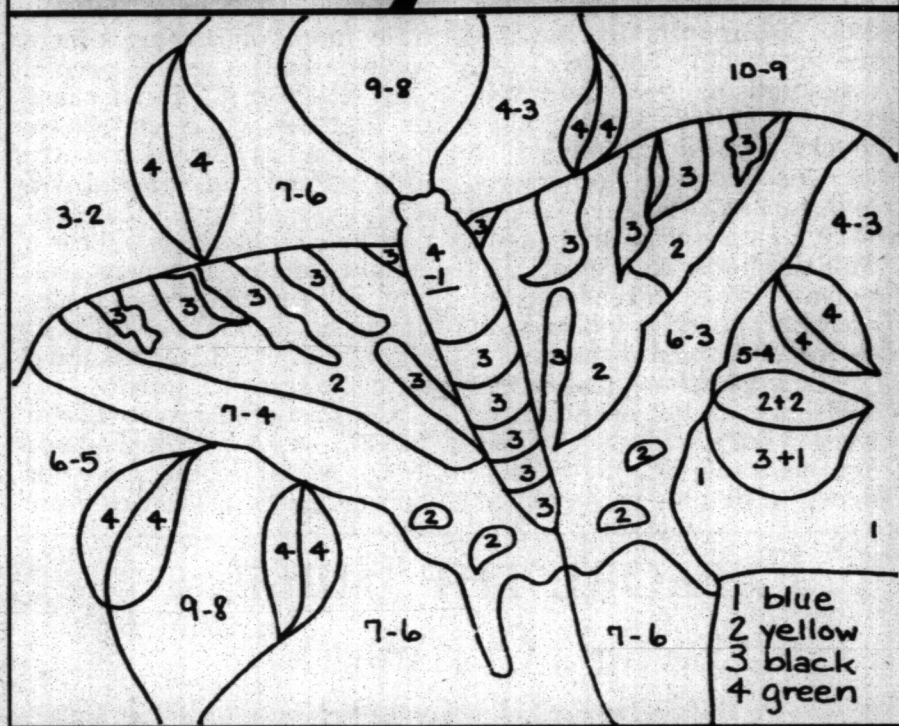
The Crossing Bridges with Purity emphasis will conclude on Feb. 14, 2000, when local communities conduct celebrations of commitments made to purity during the past year.

Eighty Christian entities have joined forces as cooperating ministries in True Love

Waits, which was begun by Southern Baptists in 1993.

For more information call 1-800-LUV-WAIT or send an e-mail to truelove-waits@bssb.com.

Color by Number



'Jesus Record' to make debut at Cornerstone Festival

NASHVILLE (Special) — The legacy of Rich Mullins, "The Jesus Record," as well as segments of the film documentary, "Homeless Man: The

Restless Heart of Rich Mullins," will make its public debut at the Cornerstone Festival's Compassion International stage Friday, July 3.

Mullins' band, The Ragamuffin Band (Rick Elias, Jimmy Abegg, Mark Robertson, and Aaron Smith), will perform songs from "The Jesus Record," which releases along with the film on Myrrh Records June 30.

One of Mullins' favorite singers Ashley Cleveland, who is featured on "The Jesus Record" will join The Ragamuffin Band on stage at the Cornerstone Festival to perform that song.

Christian music pioneer Randy Stonehill will likewise join The Ragamuffin Band to perform the song, "Nothing is Beyond You," from "The Jesus Record."

Closing the concert that evening, The Ragamuffin Band will again be joined by Cleveland, Stonehill, and all artists appearing on the Compassion

International stage that day to perform the Mullins song "I See You."

In addition to joining the Ragamuffins on stage, each artist participating that day, including Sixpence None The Richer, Mitch McVicker and The Kid Brothers of St. Frank, This Train, and Greg & Rebecca Sparks, will perform at least two Rich Mullins songs during their respective performances.

"In an idealistic spirit of inclusion that we believe Rich would appreciate," said Steve Brallier, The Ragamuffin Band manager, "any artist who wants to participate on this tour and help pay tribute to this dearly missed artist will have their opportunity to do so."

"This will be a one-time-only tour to honor the legacy of Rich Mullins."

Speaking for The Ragamuffin Band, noted producer, artist and songwriter Rick Elias, said, "We want to present a living

memorial of Rich Mullins' life and work. More importantly, we hope to point to the one whom Rich served, Jesus, and honor Him with this tour."

Held in Bushnell, Illinois, the annual Cornerstone Festival is one of the largest music, arts, and issues oriented festivals in America, drawing a unique and diverse audience of 25,000 from around the U.S. and the world.

The music, art, and extreme recreational programs are as varied as the audience that attends. Additional information on the festival may be found at <http://cornerstone.jesusfreak.com>.

When Rich Mullins died tragically on September 19, 1997, he left behind a powerful legacy of music that will serve the body of Christ for years to come.

Earlier this year the Gospel Music Association (GMA) honored that legacy by naming Mullins Artist of the Year.

Doubling up at Wade Church



Wade Church, Jackson Association, recently recognized multiple births in their congregation. Twelve sets of siblings were present as well as six members whose siblings were unable to attend.

Pictured are (front, from left) Callie and Craig Greenough, Anna and Katie Brown, Nicole, Nika and Natalie Taylor, (second row) Nicholas Chesser (held by mother), Benn and Garrett Butler, Blake and Brett Bagwell, (third row) Jacob Chesser (held by father) Allison Baughman and Adrienne Riley, Dawn and Tracy Carter, (fourth row) Cole and Cain Kennedy (held by parents), Harry and Larry Robertson, and Rachael Waltman and Richard Canty. Not pictured are Bobby and Walter Lee, Wade Church's original set of twins and lifetime members. Bill Barton is pastor.



Dear Pen Pal Club,
Hi. My name is Seth Whaley. I am 10 years old and I will be in fifth grade next year. It will be wonderful to be a pen pal with you. Please send me a picture of you. My hobbies are drawing, swimming, and riding my bike. Please write to me at the address of 3281 Hwy 349 South, Potts Camp, MS 38659. P.S. I am a member of Salem Baptist Church at Potts Camp.
Your Pen Pal,
Seth